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LARSON HAILS PASSAGE OF DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION BILL AS GOOD NEWS FOR CONNECTICUT

WASHINGTON, D.C. ♦ U.S. Congressman John B. Larson (CT-01) today hailed the Defense Authorization bill, S. 1438, that was passed by the House of Representatives today as positive news for the nation's defense and the State of Connecticut.

Larson stated: "The defense authorization bill passed by the House today contains full funding for several defense projects that are critical to our national defense as well as Connecticut's defense industry and workforce. I am particularly pleased to see that the F-22 Raptor and Joint Strike Fighter received full funding in the legislation. These aircraft represent the next generation of military flight technology and are absolutely necessary in the effort to maintain America's military air superiority and strength in the future.

"There is work left to be done as Congress takes up the Defense Appropriations bill in the coming weeks, but this bill provides a solid position moving toward the final piece of the defense budget," said Larson. "The legislation also contains important provisions that relate to homeland defense and aid to fire departments, who are often the first to respond to a crisis.

"I am pleased to see that the committee increased the existing firefighter grant program from \$300 million to \$900 million per year through 2004, and expanded the grants to include equipment and training to help firefighters respond to a terrorist or a weapons of mass destruction attack. While this increase in funding is critical to addressing the needs of our first responders, I will continue to pursue provisions of the legislation I have sponsored, the Municipal Preparation and Strategic Response Act (MPSR) [H.R. 3161]. MPSR seeks not only to increase funding in the Firefighter Assistance Program for counter-terrorism training and

equipment, but also to repeal the local funding match requirements of the program," said Larson.

The following is a summary of funding for projects important to Connecticut:

CHANDLER EVANS, West Hartford, CT

Universal Full Authority Digital Engine Control ... \$8 million

Liquid or Light-end Air (LOLA) Boost Pump ... \$2 million

ENSIGN BICKFORD COMPANY, Simsbury, CT

Modernization Demolition Initiators ... \$2 million

Anti-personnel Obstacle Breaching System ... \$2.5 million

PRATT & WHITNEY, East Hartford, CT

F-15 "E-Kit"; Engine Upgrades ... \$25 million

F-16 ANG Block 42 Engine Upgrade ... \$30 million

C-17 ... \$3.5 billion, 15 a/c

F-22 ... \$2.7 billion, 13 a/c

...\$379.2 million, advanced procurement

...\$865.5 million, research & development

F-35 Joint Strike Fighter ... \$1.5 billion

SIKORSKY, Stratford, CT

RAH-66 Comanche ... \$816.4 million

UH-60 Black Hawk ... \$277 million, 22 a/c

GENERAL DYNAMICS/ELECTRIC BOAT, Groton, CT

New Virginia Class Attack Submarine ... \$1.6 billion

Guided Missile Submarine (SSGN) Conversion ... \$458.2 million

Homeland Defense Funding:

Assistance for Firefighters ♦ The bill increased the existing firefighter grant program from \$300 million to \$900 million per year through 2004, and expanded the grants to include equipment and training to help firefighters respond to a terrorist or a weapons of mass destruction attack. The United States Fire Administration, an organization within the Federal Emergency Management Agency, will administer funds for the program.